

JO Consulting
EU PROJECTS



INNovaSouth

**Voucher for Workplace Innovations
in Southern European SMEs**



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 861874

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Article 1- The purpose of the call

INNovaSouth project is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme under grant agreement No 861874.

It is a priority for the European Commission to finance a piloting scheme for the uptake of workplace innovation by SMEs. It will aim at creating interregional networks gathering national or regional innovation support agencies, which will work together to create pilot schemes supporting the uptake of workplace innovation in SMEs. The composition of the networks should reflect similar needs of SMEs and a comparable entrepreneurship culture in the area covered by the network. This approach will enable the creation of new, context-based workplace innovation support schemes.

In this context, the aim of INNovaSouth Initiative is to provide dedicated SME instruments able to stimulate Southern European SMEs to implement new organizational models for the management of human resources and innovative solutions for the modernization of the workplace and to disseminate results at EU level encouraging other European SMEs to replicate similar initiatives.

The INNovaSouth innovative model of best practices of non-technological innovation is explained into the **Online Manual of Good Practices for Workplace innovation** <https://www.innovasouthproject.eu/online-manual/main/> and will allow Italian and Greek SMEs to find simple, immediate and innovative solutions to increase employee's motivation and productivity, which will be translated into added value for the business and more benefits for the entrepreneurs.

This Call for proposal is for the assignment of Vouchers for Italian (region Sicily) and Greek (region Thessaly) SMEs to be spent on workplace innovations activities, to encourage local SMEs to adopt effectively these innovative solutions.

In addition to the Vouchers, partners will provide the winning SMEs access to "WPI system" an online training programme where managers and employees, will improve their learning capabilities and diffusion of knowledge, which are important for keeping workers' skills up-to-date. The e-learning courses within this online system will be highly interactive and will include themes on workplace innovation, English language, lean management and development of soft skills.

<https://www.innovasouthproject.eu/>

Project Partners

- P1. JO CONSULTING (JOC) - ITALY
- P2. Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED) - GREECE

Project Duration:

01/06/2019 - 31/05/2021



Article 2- Eligible applicants

Beneficiaries to be considered eligible must:

- Be located in Italy (region of Sicily) or Greece (region of Thessaly)
- Be micro and small enterprises operating in any sector since minimum two years

Beneficiaries must be micro and small enterprises **according** to the recommendation 2003/361 / EC of 6 May 2003, published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 124 of 20 May 2003, regardless of their legal form, as well as the accounting regime adopted.

Entities without independent legal status, such as natural persons are excluded.

Article 3 – Budget

The maximum amount of grants allocated to this Call is **192.000 €**. Grants are fully funded by European Union's Horizon 2020 -Coordination and support action - grant agreement No. 861874.

There is an initial appointed assignment of 96.000 € for each of the two target Regions. In the event that one target Region is not in the position to award grants for such amount, transfers to the other Target Region will be possible.

The value of a **single Voucher is 8.000€** per beneficiary **as a lump sum**. The whole Voucher amount must be spent on workplace innovations. The Voucher will be paid entirely to the beneficiaries at the end of the implementation phase, once assessed the coherence with Programme objectives.

Only one Voucher request is allowed for each SME.

In addition to the Voucher, SME will be given **free access** to the online training programme **“WPI system”** developed by JO Consulting and IED, available online at the following link <https://www.innovasouthproject.eu/> within the private area reserved to the beneficiaries, and it is **mandatory** to follow in order to get the Voucher. The e-course will be both for employees and for management. Staff in charge to follow the course should take a final test as a proof and attach the certificate to the request of payment (Annex 4).

Article 4- Eligible project activities

SMEs have to apply Voucher requests aimed at implementing activities and best practices that falls into the INNovaSouth Model, specifically defined in the **Online Manual of Good Practices on Workplace Innovation**, finding inspiration from prior examples implemented by other SMEs.

In particular, each organization should select one or more pillar of workplace innovations among the following four and according to their needs:

1. **Jobs and teams**
2. **Organizational structures, management & procedures**
3. **Employee driven improvement & innovation: creating opportunities for reflection and improvement**
4. **Co-created leadership and horizontal structure: hearing the employee's voice**

A full list can be found at this link <https://www.innovasouthproject.eu/online-manual/main/> and must be indicated during application phase, as described in article 5.



For each workplace innovation actions chosen **will be assigned different score points** according to the level of importance, as better described in article 7.

The lump sum of 8.000 euro that the companies will receive can be spent without particular restrictions, provided that the costs are attributable to the implementation of innovations in the workplace. As an example, it is possible to use the Voucher to purchase services, equipment, decorative elements or furniture for the workplace, etc.

Article 5- Submission process

Applications can be submitted **starting from the 16st of March 2020** and not later than **3rd of June 2020, 17.00 local time**. Late submissions will not be possible, unless an extension of the closing of the call is officially communicated by the Coordinator. Applicant will receive a "Call Closed" notification.

In order to apply, SMEs participant have to:

- a) Send the **online application form** directly on project website, after registration, available at this link: <https://www.innovasouthproject.eu/call-for-proposal/>
- b) Print the application form submitted and add signature and stamp of the legal representative of the applicant organization
- c) Send signed application form, signed Annex 3 and official legal certificate of the company via PEC to the following address joconsulting@pec.jogroup.eu for Italian applicants, or via email to the following address projects@ied.eu for Greek applicants.

Applicants are obliged to use templates available on the website. Applications can be fulfilled in English, Greek or Italian language.

An **acknowledgment of receipt** will be sent to the Applicant, including a time stamp (day & time) of the submission and an **automatic submission code** to save accurately because it will identify the applicant in the list of awarded beneficiaries.

Article 6- Obligations of Beneficiaries

By applying to this Call, applicants formally accept the following conditions that will be reported also on the Agreement in case of being awarded:

- a) The beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the action is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').
- b) The parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at the time it is disclosed ('confidential information').
- c) Beneficiaries accept their responsibility on accuracy and veracity of data and documents submitted for proving the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria when submitting their applications.



- d) Beneficiaries, upon request, will fully support their respective target region's managing organization, the INNovaSouth Coordinator, the EC and other Audit Entities, by providing information and documentation aimed to verify legality of funded operations.
- e) Beneficiaries are obliged to store the documents for external audit purposes for 5 years, on either paper or electronic version.
- f) Beneficiaries must ensure that the recipients of the financial support allow the EC, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control, audit and monitoring on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the final recipient's premises, and shall comply with the Regulation for the Protection of the financial interests of the Union.
- g) The beneficiaries must promote the project INNovaSouth and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner. Any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.) and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the grant must: (a) display the EU emblem and (b) include the following text:
- For communication activities: *"This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 861874"*.
 - For infrastructure, equipment and major results: *"This [infrastructure][equipment][insert type of result] is part of a project that has received funding from the [European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 861874"*. When displayed together with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.
- Beneficiaries will include references to INNovaSouth project and specifically show that funding is 100% under European Union's Horizon 2020 - Coordination and support action - Grant Agreement No. 861874.
- h) The Coordinator cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the third parties involved in the action as a consequence of implementing the Agreement, including for gross negligence. Except in case of force majeure, the beneficiaries must compensate the Coordinator for any damage it sustains as a result of the implementation of the action or because the action was not implemented in full compliance with the Agreement.

Article 7- Evaluation procedure

The applications will be evaluated within two weeks from the close of the Call, so within **17 June 2020** by consortium members that will sign a Confidentiality and conflict of interest Declaration.

The evaluation is structured as follows:

- Eligibility criteria (Article 2): only eligible applicants' proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria described in Table 1;
- Evaluation criteria (Table 1):
 - **Workplace innovations' relevance**
 - **Impact**
 - **Project feasibility**
 - **Gender equality**



Table 1

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION	POINTS
a. Workplace innovations' relevance	Choice of the workplace innovations that have the most innovative impact on the company's procedures.	up to 40
b. Impact	Project capacity to enhance the workplace innovation knowledge, strength the employees wellness and promote the company's growth.	up to 30
c. Project feasibility	Clarity and pertinence of the objectives, feasibility of ideas presented and future replicability.	up to 15
d. Gender equality	The role of women in the company and kind of actions are adopted to support the women work-life balance	up to 15
Total score		up to 100
min. threshold		55

The applications above the **threshold of 55 points** will be ranked in a reserve list according to the obtained score and it could be financed in case of sliding of the ranking.

Below are the specific questions addressed on each of the criteria:

CRITERION	QUESTIONS
a) Workplace innovations' relevance	Q1: Does the proposal demonstrate a comprehensive command in the field of workplace innovation and present a relevant and timely challenge? Q2: Does the proposed activities and practices bring added value in tackling the challenge in relation to existing efforts at the European and/or international level?
b) Impact	Q3: Does the proposal clearly contribute to knowledge creation, transfer of knowledge and career development? Q4: Is the plan for dissemination and/or exploitation of results clear and attainable and does it contribute to promote workplace innovation?
c) Project feasibility	Q5: Are the objectives presented relevant to the challenge, clear and ambitious? Q6: Is the work plan (tasks, activities, timeframe, deliverables) appropriate to ensure the achievement of the objectives?

d) Gender equality	Q7: Does the proposal ensures and promote gender equality?
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In particular, about the first criterion a), **priority** will be given to the proposals that will include Workplace innovation practices of **Category 2**.

PILLAR	WORKPLACE INNOVATION	CATEGORY
Pillar 1. Jobs and teams	Implement job rotation	2
	Develop employees' soft skills	1
	Working environment: decorations and furniture	1
	Make working hours pleasant by listening to music and wearing favourite clothes	1
	Organize company and team-building events	2
	Create a brainstorming space	1
Pillar 2. Organizational structures, management and procedures	Grant extra days off as a productivity reward	1
	Use a lean management approach	1
	Optimize your internal management procedures with a CRM	2
	Give benefits and gift cards to employees	1
	Adopt flexible and smart working!	1
Pillar 3. Employee driven improvement and innovation: creating opportunities for reflection and improvement	Looking for professional training sessions and seminars for your employees	2
	Improve your employees' competences with life-long education courses	1
	Grant master or business school for your employees	1
	Organize brainstorming sessions	1
	Supporting employees work-life balance by implementing mentoring and coaching sessions	2

Pillar 4. Co-created leadership and horizontal structure: hearing the employee's voice	Promote your employees active engagement in your company's vision and mission	1
	Transparency about company practices as a way to promote co-created leadership	2
	Acquire useful feedback about relations with clients and suppliers	2
	Boost and improve your company's internal communication	1
	Listen to your employees voice: develop your internal evaluation system!	2

Each awarded **applicant will be notified individually about its results** and an explanation of next steps to do. Likewise, non-awarded applicants will be individually notified with reasons for administrative rejection.

After evaluation and review, the **official list of SMEs awarded** will be published on the project website <https://www.innovasouthproject.eu/> **within June 2020**. The list will contain the submission code instead of the name of the company, for privacy reasons.

Article 8 –Project implementation

Starting from the date of publication of the list of beneficiaries and by **30 November 2020**, companies will proceed with the implementation of good practices in the workplace as foreseen during the application phase and approved with the positive evaluation. It is not possible to extend the duration of the project after 30 November 2020.

During the implementation phase, beneficiaries are required to follow the free **online training program "WPI system"** created as part of the INNovaSouth project obtaining the certificate of participation. The course will be made available on the INNovaSouth website in the reserved area.

The beneficiaries will also receive **two questionnaires to be administered to employees** as a mandatory activity to obtain the Voucher. In particular, the first survey must be administered to employees before implementing innovations in the workplace instead the second one after the implementation. The purpose of this activity is to detect and report the results achieved with the implementation of these practices within the organization and show the benefits compared to the initial situation.

Article 9 –Reporting and payments

Once the implementation have been completed, and not later than **31 December 2020**, the beneficiary can send the Request of payment (Annex 4 and Annex 5) via PEC to the following address



joconsulting@pec.iogroup.eu for Italian beneficiaries or via email to the following address projects@ied.eu for Greek beneficiaries.

The model to follow for the **Request of payment** is **Annex 4** and **Annex 5**. Upon payment request, the total amount of **€ 8,000.00** will be credited by bank transfer to the beneficiary's current account, as indicated in Annex 4. The disbursement will take place in a **single solution** at the end of the implementation phase of the practices, once assessed the consistency with the project objectives and in any case **by March 31, 2021**.

Article 10 – Contacts

For any further information please contact INNovaSouth Coordinator at <https://www.innovasouthproject.eu/contacts/>

If you want to contact us for a technical problem in relation to the online application form, please ensure that you contact the Coordinator well in advance of the deadline for submission.

Article 11- Annexes

Annex 1 - Call Announcement *(to sign and send during submission phase)*

Annex 2 - Calendar *(to sign and send during submission phase)*

Annex 3 - Applicant's Declaration on eligible requirements *(to fill and send during submission phase)*

Annex 4 - Request for Payment form *(to fill and send during reporting phase)*

Annex 5 - Beneficiaries' Declaration *(to fill and send during reporting phase)*

All the Annexes are available on INNovaSouth website <https://www.innovasouthproject.eu/call-for-proposal/>